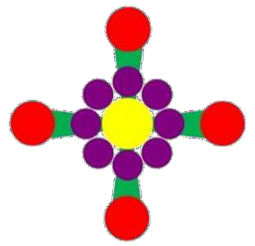


The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
**Sunday 18 May 2025**  
**The Fifth Sunday of Easter**



**Liz put together our liturgy for this weekend**

Call to worship

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!  
**He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you  
**and also with you.**

The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.  
**Let us rejoice and sing God's praise for ever.**

Almighty God,  
Your Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence.  
Give us new hearts and constant wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Confession

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.  
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil  
And confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

***Silence for reflection***

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,  
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,  
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength,  
and not by the power of your resurrection.  
In your mercy, forgive us.  
**Lord, hear us and help us.**

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,  
as faithless and not believing.  
In your mercy, forgive us.  
**Lord, hear us and help us.**

We have lived for this world alone,  
and doubted our home in heaven.  
In your mercy, forgive us.  
**Lord, hear us and help us.**

May the God of love and power  
Forgive you and free you from your sins  
Heal and strengthen us by his Spirit  
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**He has given us new life and hope.**  
**He has raised Jesus from the dead.**

God has claimed us as his own.  
**He has brought us out of darkness.**  
**He has made us light to the world.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Risen Christ,  
your wounds declare your love for the world  
and the wonder of your risen life:  
give us compassion and courage  
to risk ourselves for those we serve,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.**

## The Readings

## First reading: Acts 11: 1-18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So, when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?' Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, 'I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely, I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." But I replied, "By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth." But a second time the voice answered from heaven, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, "Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved." And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?' When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.'

**Thanks be to God for the gift of his word.**

## Second reading: John 13:31-35

When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

**Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word.**

## Reflection with Robert

If I had received a pound for every time I have heard the words “love one another as I have loved you”, I would be a wealthy man. If I had received a pound for every time I heard the words “love one another as I have loved you” and acted in the way that Jesus has loved me, I would be a poor man.

I find it easy to understand that we should love one another, and I hope I can demonstrate that that is what I try to achieve in my daily life. This love is not a new idea, as love of neighbour is throughout the whole of the bible and in the commandments. But to love one another as Jesus has loved has made me think about these words and has given me a challenge. How can I even start to love as Jesus has loved me?

In today’s culture, the word ‘love’ means many things. You can love your husband or wife, your country, your cat, your mobile phone or your car, but hopefully you don’t love your husband or wife the same way you love your mobile phone or car. Agape (God’s love) is an unconditional commitment to love and doesn’t change whether the love is returned or not. Your heart decides to seek the other person’s highest good, no matter how they may respond. But it is the way that Jesus loves that is new: through service. Love is selfless and unconditional, and directs kindness, respect, and loyalty towards the loved one. ‘God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. What makes us stand out isn’t our words but our love for one another. When we can overcome our

differences, when we can accept denomination, race, and culture and truly love one another, the world is drawn to Christ.

Unloved people are often unloving people, so it's important that we feel loved by God. When we don't feel genuinely loved, we don't feel like giving love. So, first, we have to experience God's love for ourselves. During our worst acts and in our lowest moments, Jesus loves us.

Knowing we're loved by Jesus gives us value and security; it also enables us to risk loving others. All God asks is that we're willing to love, and He'll supply the power to do it. 'The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us'

So, to answer my question, "how can I even start to love as Jesus has loved me"? One of our confessional prayers on Sunday gave me a clue: " We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing", but what Jesus asks us to do, He empowers us to do: 'The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. So hopefully I can start earning those pounds again.

### Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith  
in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ died for our sins  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he was buried;  
he was raised to life on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
afterwards he appeared to his followers,  
and to all the apostles:  
this we have received,  
and this we believe.  
Amen.**

Lord Jesus, we come before you during Eastertide with thanks for your mercy and grace and our salvation through your death and resurrection. We thank you for the depth of your love, a love which shows no favoritism, a love for all humankind, defeating barriers of age, gender, race, culture or social standing. Fill us with the same love, deepen our devotion to you so we can honour you with reverence and a greater compassion to others. Keep us free from judgmental attitudes remembering that what you have made clean, we cannot call unclean.

**Lord in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer**

Lord, bring your healing to the nations; bringing food supplies, where there is hunger; freedom where there is oppression; hope where there is despair. We pray for all who work to bring your vision of a just, fair and peaceful world to fruition. Give vision and wisdom to leaders and negotiators as they face the huge challenge of finding peaceful outcomes in lands with a history of long standing grudges. We pray for India and Pakistan, for Israel and Palestine, for the Ukraine and Russia, for the Sudan and for all people who are living with violence, terrorism and persecution.

**Lord in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer**

Peter's vision ushered a new beginning for the church as your word was spread, opening access for all to learn about the love and salvation of Christ. We pray for all those facing new beginnings. For Anna as she is licensed today and commences her new journey of service to the church and people of Honley and Brockholes; for Richard and Heather as they plan for their new beginning in the Keighley Benefice; for Alison, Liz and our administrator Nicole that any extra responsibilities will not be a burden. Guide us and unite us to work together and share with the preparations for the new journey ahead. We pray for the Diocese of Leeds as a successor for Bishop Nick is sought and the Church of England seeking to appoint a new Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray for our benefice as the process to appoint a new Rector commences. We pray for the person who you are calling to be the next Rector here, that they will hear your voice and respond to your call, so that your vision for us will be fulfilled. We give

you thanks and our clergy our gratitude for all their teaching, leading and guidance. We pray for Pope Leo as he commences his new beginning leading our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic church, that he will serve his people and church to the glory of God our Father.

**Lord in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer**

We pray for the ill and the vulnerable. As mental health week draws to a close, we pray the vision of a safe and positive community will continue, that our churches will be places of sanctuary for anyone who is struggling with life and circumstances. We pray for those we know who are dealing with illness, anxiety about test results or awaiting or recovering from surgery. Lord Jesus, we pray that your peace will comfort those who are grieving and aching with sorrow at the passing of someone they love and miss greatly, we commend them to your unfailing love which lasts beyond this life.

We give you thanks for our communities, for the children attending our schools, that they will be safe and where there are problems they can be identified and appropriate help given. We pray for the businesses, shops, farms, medical practices and community centres and we give you thanks for the beauty of the surrounding countryside and for the glorious blossom and hedgerows. Help us to be good neighbours, stewards of the land and good disciples as we share the love of Jesus through our words and actions.

**Merciful Father,  
Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.  
Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray  
**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

### **The Peace**

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples  
and said, 'Peace be with you.'  
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.  
**The Peace of the Lord be wit you!**

### **Closing prayer**

Eternal God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:  
grant us to walk in his way,  
to rejoice in his truth,  
and to share his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ  
has given us the victory,  
give us joy and peace in our faith;  
and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us all  
today and always. **Amen**

We are raised to new life with Christ.  
Go in his peace. Alleluia, alleluia.  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**